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A SERMON

Preached before the

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AT

WHITE-HALL,

March 7. 167$\frac{8}{9}$.

By *EDWARD STILLINGFLEET*, D.D. Dean of St. *Pauls*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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Matth. X. 16.

Be ye therefore wiſe as Serpents, and harmleſs as Doves.

IN the beginning of this Chapter we read of one of the greateſt and moſt improbable deſigns that ever was, *viz. Chriſt's* ſending out his twelve *Apoſtles* to convert and to reform the World. For, although the occaſion of their firſt *Miſsion*, was to prepare the Jewiſh Nation for entertaining the doctrine of the Meſſias, and therefore they are commanded *to go to the loſt ſheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*; *and as they went to preach*; *ſaying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; yet our Saviour in his following diſcourſe mentions ſeveral things which cannot be applied to their firſt going abroad, particularly, that which relates to their hard uſage and bad entertainment from the world; which we do not find they met with from the Jews upon

v. 6.

v. 7.

this general message, but rather the contrary:
v. 9, 10, 11. for which cause he bids them *to provide nothing for themselves*, foreseeing that in all places there would be some that would be ready to receive them kindly; and when the *Seventy Disciples* were sent
Luk. 10. 17. upon a like errand, *they returned with joy*, which such young beginners would hardly have done, if they had met with such sharp persecutions then, which Christ here foretells his *Apostles* should suffer for preaching the Gospel. Either therefore we must say that St. *Matthew* puts things together by way of Common Place, as he seems to do the *Miracles* and *Parables* of our *Saviour*, without pursuing the *Order* of *time*, as S. *Luke* doth, and so upon occasion of *Christs sending out his Apostles* sets down all that relates to their *Mission*, although delivered at several times; or else that Christ himself did now at first acquaint them with all the difficulties that should attend their imployment in preaching the *Gospel* to the world, and consequently thought it necessary to give them at once their full instructions for their discharge of so great a trust, and due behaviour under so hard a service. A trust indeed so great, a service so hard as to require the *Wisdom* of an *Angel*, and the *Innocency* of *Adam* in *Paradise*; so many were the difficulties, so powerful were the prejudices, so dangerous were the snares and temptations, which in all places did hinder the success of so great a Work

Work. We are apt to admire and applaud the mighty conquests which men do make over some small parts of the world, by the subtilty of their Wit, or by the force of their Arms, or by the vastness of their Treasure; but in all these cases, there is nothing wonderful; for the causes being supposed, there is at least a great probability the event should follow: But for twelve inconsiderable persons, as to all outward circumstances, without craft, without arms, without money, to undertake the conquest of the world, by changing not only mens opinions as to Religion, but which is far more uneasie, the hearts and lives of men; seems at first appearance so unlikely a thing, that though none but very wise men could hope to manage it, yet none who were thought so would ever undertake it. Yet no less than this was the work which *Christ* sent abroad his *twelve Apostles* upon; and he tells them, very little to their comfort, what hardship they were like to meet with, *to be betrayed by friends, persecuted by enemies, and hated of all men for his names sake*: yea so great would the rage and malice and cruelty of men be against them, that he saith in the beginning of this verse, *Behold I send you as lambs among sheep in the midst of Wolves.* What! to be destroyed and devoured by them? No, but to turn those very *Wolves* into *sheep*. But what powerful charms must they use to secure themselves from present danger, and to work such

v. 21, 22. 17.

mighty

mighty change? no other than those which our Saviour recommends in the words of the Text, *Be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* Not as though we were to search all the properties of *Serpents* and *Doves* to understand the meaning of these words, and to determine the truth or falshood of all the relations that are made concerning both of them; but as *Solomon* chose the *Ant* for an example of *diligence*, so our Saviour designing to joyn *Wisdom* and *Innocency* together proposes the *Serpent* for one and the *Dove* for the other; to let his *Disciples* understand that he allows them so much *Wisdom* as is consistent with *innocency*, and perswades them to no more *simplicity* than is consistent with *Wisdom*. For Wisdom without Innocency turns into craft and cunning; and Simplicity without Wisdom is meer folly.

But the great difficulty lyes in the joyning these two together. For as the world goes and is like to do, men will be apt to say, How can those be *as wise as Serpents*, who must be *as harmless as Doves*? If all the world were agreed in the practice of innocency, and men did not fare the worse for it, it might pass for *wisdom*; but when they have to deal with others who will use all the *Wisdom* of the *Serpent*, and are so far from being *harmless as Doves*, that they will take all the advantages that mens innocency and simplicity gives them, it seems hard

to

to reconcile theſe two together. To what purpoſe, may ſome ſay, are mens eyes bid to be open, when their hands are tyed up? Had they not better be without the Serpents ſagacity and quickneſs of ſight, than eſpy their dangers, and not uſe the moſt likely means to prevent them? What doth the *ſimplicity* of the *Dove* ſignifie, but to make them a more eaſie quarry for the birds of prey? Simplicity, and innocency, and patience, which our Saviour recommends under the phraſe of being *harmleſs as Doves*, are good leſſons for another world, but what do they ſignifie in this, which is made up of nothing but artifice and fraud, and wherein the great art and buſineſs of life ſeems to be overreaching and deceiving one another? Thoſe only ſeem to have the true ſubtilty of the *Serpent* who can turn and wind themſelves every way as makes moſt for their advantage; Who by their ſoft and eaſie motions, by their artificial glidings and inſinuations get an intereſt great enough to miſchief while they watch for an opportunity to do it. *As the Serpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty*, 2 Cor. 11. 3. *i.e.* ſay the *Fathers* by the familiarity and eaſineſs of acceſs which he had, playing as ſome fancy, about the Neck and Arms of *Eve* in the ſtate of Innocency. Thoſe have the true ſubtilty of the *Serpent* who *creep into Houſes* and underſtand the ſecrets of perſons and families; and ſo know how to addreſs, and how to keep in awe: who ſeem *as harm-* *Ramirez de Prado Pentecont. c.* 1.

leſs.

less as Doves till they have a fair opportunity of instilling their poison, and do the greater mischief by being thought so innocent. Who have the dangerous teeth and the double tongue, who can deny the Truth without lying, and forswear themselves without perjury; who would sanctifie the greatest villanies by their good intentions; and when they are *ravenous* as *Wolves*, and as *cruel* as *Vultures*, would yet be thought *as harmless as Doves*, or as innocent *as a Child new born*.

What now can simplicity and innocency, and meekness, and patience signifie against all this serpentine subtilty? And if you take away from the Serpent his artificial motion and his poison, you leave him weak and contemptible, ready to be trampled on by every passenger, having nothing to defend himself but his skin and eye-sight. And if you do allow his most natural properties, the innocency of the Dove is a very unequal match for him if they be opposed, and seem of so different natures that they can hardly be joyned together in the same subject.

And yet notwithstanding all these objections, it was certainly the design of our *Saviour* in these words,

1. To recommend the *conjunction* and *union* of these two to his disciples, *being wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*.

2. To do it chiefly upon this consideration, that

that this would be the beſt means to promote his Religion againſt all the arts and deſigns of men, as well as the beſt ſecurity for themſelves.

And therefore in the proſecuting this ſubject I ſhall endeavour theſe two things,

1. To ſhew wherein the *conjunction* of theſe two doth conſiſt.

2. That this is the beſt *means* to promote the *Chriſtian Religion* againſt all the miſchievous arts and devices of men.

1. Wherein the *conjunction* of theſe two doth conſiſt. It is no hard matter to tell men how they may be *wiſe as Serpents*, *viz.* by foreſight and caution, ſo as to diſcern and prevent unneceſſary dangers; not to run themſelves fooliſhly and vainly upon needleſs troubles, nor to draw perſecutions upon themſelves, when they can decently and lawfully avoid them; not to give advantages to their enemies by their weakneſs and indiſcretion, nor a juſt occaſion of offence to any; but in all lawful things to endeavour to gain upon them, and by all acts of kindneſs and charity to recommend our Religion to them. Neither is it hard to tell wherein we muſt appear to be *harmleſs as Doves*, *viz.* by ſimplicity and integrity of mind, by meekneſs and patience, by forgiving injuries, and bearing perſecutions as becomes *Chriſtians*, by a holy, innocent, and unblameable converſation: but the difficulty ſtill lyes in the *con-*

junction and *mixture* of both these; which as S. *Chrysostome* observes, is the thing which Christ especially aims at, so as to make one vertue arise from both of them; as *Greg. Nazianzen* said of his Father, *that he neither suffered the Wisdom of the Serpent to degenerate into cunning, nor the innocency of the Dove into indiscretion, but made up one compleat kind of vertue from the mixture of both together*; and that I suppose lyes in these things, (1.) *Integrity of Mind*, (2.) *Ingenuity*, or fairness of behaviour; (3.) *Meekness and Patience*: and in the due practice of these consists that *prudent Simplicity* which results from these two, *being wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves*. Which I shall make appear by shewing, that men cannot be *harmless as Doves* without them; and that they are so far from being inconsistent with being *wise as Serpents*, that a great part of *wisdom* lyes in them.

Chrys. in loc.

Greg. Nazian. orat. 19.

I. *Integrity of Mind*; which is opposed to falseness and hypocrisie; and therefore S. *Paul* joyns *simplicity and Godly sincerity* together. We read of some in *Scripture* who are said *to have a double heart*, as well as *a double tongue*: they are δίψυχοι, saith S. *James*, men with *two Souls*, one for God and another for the world; or rather none at all for God, (since he must have all or none) but one to appearance and another in reality, having quite other thoughts, intentions and designs than they make

2 Cor. 1. 12. Psal. 12. 2. Jam. 4. 8.

make the world believe. Some tell us that the Serpent hath no forked tongue, but through the quickneſs of its motion, and ſuddenneſs of its vibration it appears to be ſo; men have but one heart and mind, but they may uſe ſuch artificial motions and ſudden turnings, as to appear to have more. But this is contrary to that integrity and ſimplicity which Chriſt requires, and the *Scripture* every where ſo much extols, as to place mens *perfection* and *wiſdom* in it. *Noah* was ſaid to be *a juſt man and perfect in his Generations*, becauſe he maintained his integrity in a very corrupt and degenerate Age. *Job* is ſaid to be *a man perfect and upright, one that feareth God and eſcheweth evil*: and in another place of *Job*, the *perfect* and the *wicked* are oppoſed: *he deſtroyeth the perfect and the wicked*; i. e. the good and the bad. *Mark the perfect man and behold the upright*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. *The righteouſneſs of the perfect ſhall direct his way*, ſaith *Solomon*; *but the wicked ſhall fall by his own wickedneſs*; and in the next words; *The righteouſneſs of the upright ſhall deliver them, but tranſgreſſors ſhall be taken in their own naughtineſs*. And if *Solomons* word may be taken, a mans integrity is his greateſt wiſdom; for *righteouſneſs*, ſaith he, *keepeth him that is upright in the way*; *but wickedneſs overthroweth the ſinner*. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely*; *but he that perverteth his wayes ſhall be known*. And therefore he concludes that *a man of underſtanding will walk uprightly*.

Iſid. Orig. l. 12. *c.* 4.

Gen. 6. 9.

Job 1. 1.

9. 22.

Pſal. 37. 37.

Prov. 11. 5.

6.

13. 6.

10. 9.

15. 21.

All this seems a strange Paradox, and to come from such as are not versed in business, nor acquainted with affairs of the world, or from those who are resolved to maintain their hypothesis, though against the common sense of mankind, as the Stoicks of old who made their Wise man beautiful though never so deformed, rich though ready to starve for poverty, and a Prince though sold for a slave; just thus doth it seem to some men to talk of the consistency of Wisdom and Simplicity together, or to suppose those take the most prudent care of their own interest, who are tied up to the strict rules of downright honesty, and are resolved with *Job to hold fast their integrity*.

But that there is nothing absurd or unreasonable in this supposition, nothing but what is true, and may be justified by the common sense and experience of mankind will appear by these considerations.

1. That is the truest Wisdom of a man which doth most conduce to the happiness of life. For Wisdom as it refers to action lies in the proposal of a right end, and the choice of the most proper means to attain it. Which end doth not refer to any one part of a mans life, but to the whole as taken together. He therefore only deserves the name of a Wise Man, not that considers how to be rich and great when he is poor and mean, nor how to be well when he is sick, nor how to escape

escape a present danger, nor how to compass a particular design; but he that considers the whole course of his life together, and what is fit for him to make the end of it, and by what means he may best enjoy the happiness of it. I confess it is one great part of a wise man never to propose too much happiness to himself here; for whoever doth so, is sure to find himself deceiv'd, and consequently is so much more miserable as he fails in his greatest expectations. But since God did not make men on purpose to be miserable, since there is a great difference as to mens conditions, since that difference depends very much on their own choice, there is a great deal of reason to place true wisdom in the choice of those things which tend most to the comfort and happiness of life.

2. That which gives a man the greatest satisfaction in what he doth, and either prevents or lessens or makes him more easily bear the troubles of life, doth the most conduce to the happiness of it. It was a bold saying of *Epicurus*, *That it is more desirable to be miserable by acting according to reason, than to be happy in going against it*; and I cannot tell how it can well agree with his notion of felicity: but it is a certain truth, that in the consideration of happiness, the satisfaction of a mans own mind doth weigh down all the external accidents of life. For, suppose a man to have riches and honours as great as *Ahasuerus* bestowed on his high-

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eſt favourite *Haman*; yet by his ſad inſtance we find that a ſmall diſcontent when the mind ſuffers it to encreaſe and to ſpread its venom, doth ſo weaken the power of reaſon, diſorder the paſſions, make a mans life ſo uneaſie to him, as to precipitate him from the height of his fortune into the depth of ruine. But on the other ſide if we ſuppoſe a man to be always pleaſed with his condition, to enjoy an even and quiet mind in every ſtate, being neither lifted up with proſperity, nor caſt down with adverſity, he is really happy in compariſon with the other. It is a meer ſpeculation to diſcourſe of any compleat happineſs in this world; but that which doth either leſſen the number, or abate the weight, or take off the malignity of the troubles of life, doth contribute very much to that degree of happineſs which may be expected here.

3. The integrity and ſimplicity of a mans mind doth all this. (1.) It gives the greateſt ſatisfaction to a mans own mind. For although it be impoſſible for a man not to be liable to error and miſtake, yet if he doth miſtake with an innocent mind, he hath the comfort of his innocency when he thinks himſelf bound to correct his error. But if a man prevaricates with himſelf and acts againſt the ſenſe of his own mind, though his conſcience did not judge aright at that time, yet the goodneſs of the bare act with reſpect to the rule, will not prevent the ſting

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that follows the want of inward integrity in doing it. *The backſlider in heart,* ſaith *Solomon, ſhall be filled with his own ways, but a good man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf.* Pro. 14.14. The doing juſt and worthy and generous things without any ſiniſter ends and deſigns, leaves a moſt agreeable pleaſure to the mind, like that of a conſtant health which is better felt than expreſſed. When a man applies his mind to the knowledge of his duty, and when he doth underſtand it, (as it is not hard for an honeſt mind to do, for as the *Oracle* anſwered the Servant who deſired to know how he might pleaſe his Maſter, *If you will ſeek it, you will be ſure to find it,*) ſets himſelf with a firm reſolution to purſue it, *though the rain falls, and the floods ariſe, and the winds blow on every ſide of him,* yet he enjoys peace and quiet within, notwithſtanding all the noiſe and bluſtering abroad; and is ſure to hold out after all, becauſe he is founded upon a rock. But take one that endeavours to blind, or corrupt or maſter his conſcience, to make it ſerve ſome mean end or deſign; what uneaſie reflections hath he upon himſelf, what perplexing thoughts, what tormenting fears, what ſuſpicions and jealouſies do diſturb his imagination and rack his mind? what art and pains doth ſuch a one take to be believed honeſt and ſincere? and ſo much the more, becauſe he doth not believe himſelf: He fears ſtill he hath not given ſatisfaction enough, and by *Clem. Alex. Str.* 4.

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overdoing it, is the more ſuſpected. It is a very unſatisfactory imployment that man hath who undertakes to perſwade others of the truth of that which himſelf at the ſame time knows to be falſe; for he is not convinced by his own arguments, and therefore deſpiſes thoſe that are, and is afraid of thoſe that ſeem to be; either he thinks them fools for believing him, or that they only flatter and ſeem to believe when they do not; and then he thinks his arts are underſtood and his credit loſt, and fears while he goes about to impoſe upon others, they may do the ſame by him. So that unleſs he could ſee into the hearts of men, (which would be no very comfortable ſight to him) all his craft and ſubtilty muſt leave him under perplexity and continual fear. But ſuppoſe that through over-officiouſneſs he happens to take ſome falſe ſtep, and ſo fall into the diſfavour of thoſe whom above all he deſired to pleaſe; how miſerable is that mans condition when he finds himſelf forſaken of God, deſpiſed by men, and without any peace or contentment within? (2.) Becauſe integrity doth more become a man, and doth really promote his intereſt in the World. It is the ſaying of *Dio Chryſoſtom* an Heathen Orator, *that Simplicity and Truth is a great and wiſe thing; but Cunning and Deceit is fooliſh and mean; For,* ſaith he, *obſerve the beaſts, the more courage and ſpirit they have, the leſs art and ſubtilty they uſe; but the more timorous and ignoble they are, the more*

Dio Chryſ. de regn. or. 1. p. 6.

falſe

false and deceitful. True Wisdom and Greatness of mind raises a man above the need of using little tricks and devices. Sincerity and honesty carries one through many difficulties which all the arts he can invent would never help him through. For nothing doth a man more real mischief in the world than to be suspected for too much craft; because every one stands upon his guard against him, and suspects plots and designs where there are none intended; insomuch that though he speaks with all the sincerity that is possible, yet nothing he saith can be believed. And is this any part of true Wisdom to lose reputation, upon which mens power and interest so much depends? From hence the most artificial men have found it necessary to put on a guise of simplicity and plainness, and make greatest protestations of their honesty when they most lie in wait to deceive. If then the reputation of integrity be so necessary, the main point to be considered as to wisdom is this, whether such reputation can be sooner gained and longer held by meer pretending to simplicity, or by the practice of it? He that only pretends to it, must act otherwise than he designs, and yet is concerned to make others believe he doth not: but in this he puts a force and constraint upon himself which is uneasie to any man, and he lets the vizard fall off sometimes when it is more observed than he thinks, and

then his countenance is taken at the greateſt diſadvantage, and this is given out for the only true Copy. And while he keeps it on; it is a hard matter to deceive all eyes; for it may be ſome byſtanders have practiſed the ſame arts themſelves, and they know the make and the faſhion, and all the ſeveral ſtrings which help to keep it from falling off: and when the ſuſpicion grows ſtrong, the laying aſide the diſguiſe will not be able to
Pſal. 15. 2. give ſatisfaction. But *he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteouſneſs, and ſpeaketh the truth in his heart*, as the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribeth the practice of integrity, may poſſibly meet with ſuch as will be ready to condemn him for hypocriſie at firſt; but when they find he keeps to a certain rule, and purſues honeſt deſigns, without any great regard to the opinion which others entertain concerning him; then all that know him cannot but eſteem and value him; his friends love him, and his enemies
Prov. 4. 18. ſtand in awe of him. *The path of the juſt*, ſaith the Wiſe man, *is as the ſhining light which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.* As the day begins with obſcurity and a great mixture of darkneſs, till by quick and ſilent motions the light overcomes the miſts and vapours of the night, and not only ſpreads its beams upon the tops of the Mountains, but darts them into the deepeſt and moſt ſhady Valleys: thus ſimplicity and integrity may at firſt appearing look dark and ſuſpicious, till by degrees

degrees it breaks through the clouds of envy and detraction, and then shines with a greater glory. Thus the Christian Simplicity was despised and reproached as folly and obstinacy, and many hard censures and sharp persecutions did men undergo for the sake of it for a long time, (as the most durable Kingdoms have had the sharpest pangs and been the longest in the birth:) but at last persecuted and despised innocency prevailed over all the craft and power of the World. It was then the great glory of Christians that their enemies could reproach them for nothing but their Religion; that they were in all other things honest and good men, only they were Christians: and then true Religion is most like to prevail in the world, when mens other vertues commend their Religion, and not when zeal for their Religion is their only vertue. When righteousness, and peace, and humility, and charity, and temperance, and patience, and a constant integrity make men enquire after a Religion which produces such fruits as these are, then it will appear that Apostles and preachers of Religion are then *wise as Serpents* as to the promoting the honour of their Doctrine, when by the innocency and simplicity of their lives they are *harmless as Doves*.

(3.) But suppose that troubles and persecutions do arise, what becomes of the *harmless Doves* then; they are soon taken and easily destroyed,

when those who are only *wise as Serpents* may see many wayes to escape danger, which the innocent Doves dare not follow them in; what wisdom then can there be in so much simplicity as makes suffering unavoidable?

This is the hardest part of the case, but that which our Saviour doth here suppose, when he saith, *Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of Wolves; be ye therefore wise as Serpents*, &c. So that, if we cannot make out this to hold in respect of sufferings, we must yield this counsel or advice of Christ to his Disciples to be defective as to the main occasion of it. To this therefore I answer in these particulars;

1. Our Saviour doth allow the *wisdom* of *prevention* as to all unnecessary dangers; for otherwise he would never have bid his Disciples *be wise as Serpents*, but only be *as quiet as Sheep and as harmless as Doves*. God forbid that Christian simplicity should be taken in so ill a sense as to hinder us from a just and necessary care of our own safety: and not only for the preservation of our selves but of our Religion too. When we have liberty and opportunity to do it, it is being stupid as Sheep, and careless as the Ravens of their young ones, and not being only *harmless as Doves*, to neglect the doing it. In such a case it is a violation of the duty we owe to God and to Posterity, if we do not use all lawful endeavours for the preservation of

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our ſelves and our Religion from all the attempts of wicked and unreaſonable men. But in caſe ſtorms do ariſe after all our care, Chriſt doth not ſeem to forbid his Diſciples making uſe of a preſent ſhelter till the ſtorm be blown over; *But when they perſecute you in this City, flee to another.* Mat. 10. 23. And ſome ſay, the likeneſs to Doves is recommended in regard that its ſafety lyes chiefly in the quickneſs of its flight. But our Saviour neither impoſes a neceſſity of ſuffering in all caſes, nor allows a liberty of flying upon every apprehenſion of danger, but leaves this matter to be determined according to circumſtances, as makes moſt for Gods honour, and his Churches good: *i. e.* herein to be *wiſe as Serpents and harmleſs as Doves*; by not expoſing themſelves to needleſs dangers when they may be avoided with a good conſcience, nor declining any neceſſary duty for the ſake of any trouble which may follow upon it. There were ſome in the *Primitive Church* who thought it unlawful in any caſe to avoid perſecution, and *Tertullian* pleads their cauſe with many plauſible reaſons; ſaying, *that perſecution is deſigned on purpoſe for tryal by God himſelf; that the allowance for flying was peculiar to the Apoſtles caſe, not to avoid perſecution, but for the more ſpeedy propagation of the Goſpel*; and ſome of the Chriſtians were ſo far from flying that they ran upon perſecution and ſeemed ambitious of Martyrdom. *S. Chryſoſtom* ſaith, *it was one of the* *Tertul. de fug. c. 1. & c. c. 6.* *Chryſ. hom. 40. in Jun. & Max.*

reaſons.

reasons Julian *gave why he would not openly persecute Christianity*; *because he knew the Christians gloried in being Martyrs*; and he would not humour them so much as to *spread his Nets* to catch such *silly Doves*, that never minded the danger they fell into. But the *Christian Church* never approved rash and indiscreet suffering, as much as it encouraged all Christians to patience and courage and perseverance; for they required not only a *just cause*, but a *necessary occasion* of suffering, and blamed those who hastned their own destruction; for they observe that *Christ* himself made use of prudent caution when he knew the Jews had designed to put him to death; for it is said, *from thence forward he walked no more publickly among the Jews*. When the storm seemed to threaten the leaders of the Church in such a manner that by their withdrawing the People might probably enjoy more quiet, and not want help enough to perform the necessary Offices, even the *Bishops* were allowed to retire; and upon this ground S. *Cyprian* and *Athanasius* justified themselves: but when the case is common, when the necessities of the Church require the presence of their Pastours, *then the good Shepherd must lay down his life for the Sheep*, as S. *Augustin* hath resolved this case in his *Epistle* to *Honoratus*. So that this whole matter belongs to *Christian prudence*, which is then most needful and fit to be used, when the resolution of the case depends

Clem. Alex. Str. 4. p. 481.

Joh. 11. 54.

Orig. in Joh. Tom. 31.

Cypr. ep. 14 Athan. de fuga.

Aug. ep. 180

pends upon particular circumſtances; ſo as not to ſhun any neceſſary duty for fear of danger, nor to run upon any unneceſſary trouble to ſhew our courage.

2. Since no wiſdom is great enough to prevent all troubles of life, that is the greateſt which makes them moſt eaſie to be endured. If the *Wiſdom of the Serpent* could extend ſo far as to avoid all the calamities that mankind is ſubject to, it would have a mighty advantage over the *ſimplicity* of the *Dove*; but ſince the moſt ſubtle contrivers cannot eſcape the common accidents of life, but do frequently meet with more vexations and croſſes than innocent and undeſigning men do, we are then to conſider, ſince the burden muſt be born, what will make it ſit moſt eaſily upon our ſhoulders: And that which abates of the weight, or adds to our ſtrength, or ſupports us with the beſt hopes, is the trueſt wiſdom. *And who is he that will harm you,* ſaith *S. Peter, if ye be followers of that which is good? i. e.* innocency is the beſt ſecurity againſt trouble which one can have in this World; but ſince the World is ſo bad as that the beſt may ſuffer in it, and for being ſuch, yet that ought not to trouble or affright them; *But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled.* But ſhould it not trouble a man to ſuffer innocently? yes, with a reſpect to others, but as to himſelf

1 Pet. 3. 13.

14.

ſelf he may more juſtly be troubled if he ſuffered juſtly. For nothing makes ſufferings ſo heavy to be born as a *guilty Conſcience*: that is a burden more inſupportable to an awakened mind than any outward affliction whatſoever. *Judas* thought himſelf to be *wiſe as a Serpent*, not only in eſcaping the danger which he ſaw Chriſt and his Diſciples falling into by the combination of the Prieſts and Scribes and Phariſees againſt them; but in ingratiating himſelf with them and making a good bargain for his own advantage: but the want of a *Dove-like innocency* marred his whole deſign; and filled his conſcience with ſuch horrour as to make him own his guilt, and put an end to his miſerable life. Whereas the other *Apoſtles* whoſe chief care was to preſerve their innocency as to any wilful ſins, though they had too much of the *fearfulneſs* as well as the *ſimplicity* of *Doves*, till the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them; yet they held out in the midſt of fears and dangers, and came
Act. 5. 41. at laſt *to rejoyce in their ſufferings*. And S. *Paul* tells
2 Cor. 1. 12. us what the cauſe of it was, *For our rejoycing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* See here, not only what peace and ſerenity, but what rejoycing follows an innocent mind, and the Teſtimony of a good conſcience! when all the

arts

arts of fleshly Wisdom will be found vain and useless, affording no satisfaction to a mans mind, when he looks back upon all of them, then sincerity and integrity of heart will give a man the most comfortable reflections, and fill him with the most joyful expectations. This enables a man to look back without horrour, to look about him without shame, to look within without confusion, and to look forward without despondency. So that as the streight line is the shortest of any; so upon greatest consideration it will be found that the upright and sincere man takes the neareſt way to his own happiness.

II. Prudent Simplicity implies the practice of *Ingenuity*; which is such a natural freedom in our words and actions, that men may thereby understand the sincerity of our mind and intention. Not that men are bound to declare all they know to every impertinent enquirer, which is *simplicity* without *prudence*; but in all cases wherein men ought to declare their minds, to do it without *fraud* and *dissimulation*; and in no case to design to overreach and deceive others. This is that *simplicity* of *Conversation* which our Saviour requires when he saith, *let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay*, i. e. you ought to converse with so much sincerity, that your bare affirma- Mat. 5. 37.

tion or denial may be sufficient, this being the proper use of speech that men may understand each others minds by their words: *for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil*, i. e. the wickedness of mankind and that distrust and suspicion which is occasioned by it, is the reason they are ever put to make use of oaths to make their Testimony appear more credible. And therefore nothing but such necessity can justifie the use of them; Oaths and Wars being never lawful but when they are necessary. Some understand the reduplication of those words, *yea, yea, nay, nay*, after a more emphatical manner; *viz.* that our words must not only agree with the *truth* of the *thing*, but with the *conception* and *sense* of our *minds*; and so the greatest *candour* and *sincerity* is commanded by them. Truth was described of old, *sitting upon an Adamant, with garments white as snow, and a light in her hand*, to intimate that clearness and simplicity and firmness that doth accompany it; such as was most remarkable in the primitive *Christians*; who abhorred any thing that looked like dissimulation and hypocrisie, especially in what concerned their Religion. In this they were plain and open, hearty and sincere, neither exasperating their enemies by needless provocations, nor using any artificial ways of compliance for their own security. When the casting some few grains of in-

Malder. de abusu restr. mem. c. 12. Sect. 3. p. 98.

Themist. orat. 3.

incenſe on the altar, and pouring out wine before the Emperors ſtatue might have ſaved their lives, they choſe rather to dye than to defile their conſciences with that impure and Idolatrous Worſhip. To be diſmiſſed after ſummons to the tribunal without compliance was a ſcandal, and raiſed ſuſpicions of ſome ſecret aſſurances given; to be proclaimed to have ſacrificed though they had not, and not to contradict it was great infamy; To procure a certificate of ſacrificing though they did not; or to pay fees to the Officers to be excuſed from doing it, made them a ſort of *libellati*, although their names were never entred in the Heathen Rolls, and they were forced to undergo ſevere penance before they were reſtored to the communion of the Church. So much ſimplicity and ſingleneſs of heart was then ſuppoſed neceſſary to the Chriſtian profeſſion. No *directing the intention*, no *ſecret reſervation*, no *abſolution* either before committing the fact or immediately upon confeſſion of it, were ever heard of or allowed in thoſe days of Chriſtian innocency and ſimplicity. If the Heathen Officers ſought after *Chriſtians*, they neither lied to them, nor betrayed their Brethren; but would rather endure torments themſelves, than expoſe others to them; for which reaſon S. *Auguſtin* highly commends the reſolution of *Firmus* an *African Biſhop*, who rather choſe to be tortured himſelf than

Euſeb. l. 8. c. 3.

Rigalt. ad Cypr. ep. 81.

Aug. de Mend. c. 13.

than discover a Christian committed to his care, who was sought after for no other reason, but because he was a Christian; and the *Heathen Emperour* himself was so pleased with it, that for his sake he forgave the other person and suffered him to enjoy his liberty. When the Christians were summoned before the Heathen Tribunals, they used no *shifting tricks or evasions*, they concealed no part in their minds of what was necessary to make what they spake to be true; they did not first peremptorily deny what they knew to be true, and then back such a denial with horrid oaths and dreadful imprecations upon themselves, and after all think to justifie the doing so by vertue of some *secret reservation* in their own minds. Is this becoming the *simplicity* and *ingenuity* of *Christians*? Such may possibly think themselves *Wise as Serpents* in so doing, but I am sure they are far from *being innocent as Doves*. But are there any who go under the name of *Christians*, who own and defend such practices? I think indeed scarce any who went under the name of *honest Heathens* ever did it. For they did not only require constancy and fidelity in oaths and promises, but simplicity and sincerity both in the making and keeping of them. They condemned the *Romans* who thought to avoid their oath by a trick, and [illegible] them back to the *Carthaginians*: they might [illegible] plaud the

Cicer. de Offic. l. 1. & 3.

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constancy of *Regulus* in observing the words of his oath as to his return, although very capable of a mental reservation; and if he did not promise the *Carthaginians* to perswade the *Roman* Senate to the Peace, he behaved himself with great sincerity as well as constancy. When the King of *Persia* thought by a trick to avoid the oath he had made to one of his Neighbour Princes, *viz.* That he would not pass such a stone which was set up as a Boundary between them, and he took up the stone and caused it to be carried before his Army; his Counsellours told him they feared such deceit would never prosper with him, because as the Prince sent him word, Covenants are to be understood according to the plain meaning of the words, and not according to any secret reservation. *Eutych. Alex.* To. 2. p. 119. p. 123.

Since then the very Heathens disallowed such artifices and frauds, are there any worse than Heathens that justifie and maintain them? Is not this rather an artifice and fraud of their Adversaries to render them odious? But even in this respect we ought to be *harmless as Doves*, and therein lies a necessary part of Christian Ingenuity, in not charging on others more than they are guilty of.

I shall therefore fairly represent the doctrine held in the *Church* of *Rome* about these matters, and leave

leave you to judge how far it is consistent with *Christian Simplicity*.

There are some things wherein the *Divines* of the *Roman Church* are agreed, and some things wherein they differ.

The things wherein they are agreed are these.

1. That an *Officious lie* is but *a venial sin*. This they do not stick to declare to be the common opinion of all their Divines. *Ex communi omnium sententiâ*, saith *Azorius*, *A lie that hurts no body; but is intended for the good of others is no mortal sin; and herein all are agreed*, saith *Reginaldus*; because say they, where there is no other fault but the meer falsity, it is not of its own nature and kind any mortal sin, for a lye of it self is a harmless thing, *or at least*, saith *Lessius*, *the hurt is not great that it doth, and it is no great matter whether men be deceived or not, if they do not suffer much by it*; and from hence he concludes it to be *venial in its own nature*. It is true, they say an *officious* lie may become a *mortal sin by accident, when it is confirmed by an oath, when it is too publick and scandalous and used by those from whom the people expects Truth, as Bishops and Preachers and Religious men*, saith *Sayr.* *Not even in them*, saith *Navarr.*, *unless the scandal be great, or their consciences tell them they are mortal sins*; or some other circumstances make it so. *If it be in matter of judicature, although the thing be small, yet I think a lie a mortal sin*, saith *Cajetan*, *because men are*

Azor. Instit. Moral. par. 3. l. 13. c. 1. dub. 2.
Reginald. prax. l. 24. sect. 5. n. 13.
Less. de just. et jure, l. 2. c. 47. dub. 6. n. 40.
Sayr. Clav. Reg. l. 11. c. 3. n. 18.
Navarr. Manc. c. 18. n. 3.
Cajet. in. 2. 2. qu 69. art. 1.

than

then bound to speak truth. That reason is of *no force at all*, say *Soto* and *Navarr*, *for that circumstance alone doth not alter the nature of the sin.* So that if a man tells never so many lyes, provided he intend to hurt no body by them, they do not make one mortal sin. For that is a fixed Rule among the *Casuists*, that *an infinite number of venial sins do not amount to one mortal*; and consequently though they have obliquity in them, yet they do not put a man out of the Favour of God. But upon these principles what security have men to invent and spread abroad lyes, provided they are intended for a good end in their own opinion? What sincerity is to be expected, when the confessing a truth may do them injury; and the telling a lye may do them good? For even *Cajetan* himself makes that only a pernicious lye, when *a man designs to do mischief by it.* They cry out upon it as a great scandal for any of us to say, *they think it lawful to lye for the Catholick cause*; and in truth they do not say so in words; for they still say, *a lye is unlawful for any end whatsoever*; but here lyes the subtilty of it; They grant it in general to be a *fault*, but such a *venial*, such an inconsiderable fault, if it be for a good end; and they have so many wayes to expiate the guilt of venial sins; that the difference is very little as to the practice of it, from making it no sin at all. And some think they had better own downright lying, than make use of such absurd wayes of

Soto de rat. tegendi secret. memb. 2. qu. 6. Navar. ubi supr. Bassæ. Theol. Pract. v. peccat. 1. n. 3. 8. Bell. de omiss. grat. & stat. peccati, l. 1. c. 13

Cajet. in 2. 2. q. 110. art. 4.

Grot. de jur. belli & pac. l. 3. c. 1. n. 17.

of evading it by mental reservations; by which men may be truly said to affirm that which they do deny, and to deny that which they do affirm. But notwithstanding this,

2. They are agreed, that *in some cases*, that which otherwise would be a *lye*, is none by the help of a *mental reservation*. Let us not therefore do the *Jesuites* so much injury to charge that upon them as their peculiar doctrine, which is common to all their Divines and Casuists. And herein *F. Parsons* was in the right, when he asserted, *that the doctrine of Equivocation and mental reservation hath been received in the Roman Church for four hundred years*: only some have extended the practice of it farther than others have done. *But in the Case of Confession they all agree without exception*, saith the same Author, *that if a man hath confessed a thing to a Priest, he may deny and swear that he never confessed it, without being guilty either of a lye or perjury; reserving this in his mind, that he hath not confessed it so as to utter it to another.* And I find the greatest enemies to the Use of *Mental reservation* in other cases, do allow it in this; and do not barely allow it, but think a man *bound in conscience to use it, under grievous sin*, saith *Parsons*, *when by no other means of silence, diversion, or evasion the said secresie can be concealed.* I do not now meddle with the

Treatise tending to Mitigation. c. 7. §. 2, 3.

c. 10 §. 1.

Genes. Sepulveda de rat. Dicendi testim. c. 3. Barns c. Æquiv. §. 28. n. 4. p. 255. Hurtado Resolut. Moral. p. 449.

Caramu. de restrict. mental. art. 13. p. 360. Steph. à Sancto Paulo Theol. Moral. tr. 5. disp. 5. dub. 7. §. 3. n. 232.

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inviolableneſs of the Seal of Confeſſion, which I do not deny a great regard ought to be had to, (where an obligation greater than that of keeping a ſecret doth not take it off, as where the Life of my Prince or the publick Safety are concerned) not from any Divine Inſtitution, but from the baſeneſs of betraying a Truſt: but I wonder how they came to think it to be *no lye or perjury* in this *Caſe*, and yet to be ſo in any other? It is to no purpoſe to alledge other Reaſons peculiar to this *caſe*, for the ſingle queſtion is, whether what a man keeps in his mind, can keep him from being guilty of a *lye*, or of *perjury* in his words? If it cannot, then not in the *caſe* of *Confeſſion*; if it may, then a mental reſervation will equally do it in any other *Caſe*. And conſequently no man who doth allow it in this caſe, can on that account diſallow it in any other.

This *Navarr* very well ſaw, and therefore from the allowance of it in this *Caſe* of *Confeſſion* he deduces the lawfulneſs of the uſe of it in all caſes wherein a man is not bound to ſpeak all he knows. The common anſwer in this *caſe* is, *that in confeſſion the Prieſt doth not know as man but as God; and therefore when he is asked any thing as a man* Navarr. *in c. human. aures, qu.* 1. *n.* 2, 3.

Quare omnes qui fatentur quod Confeſſarius verè dicere poteſt, Ille hoc non eſt mihi confeſſus, ſubintelligendo ita ut tenear prodere; cogmntur profectò confiteri quod etiam alius quilibet qui non tenetur aliquid dicere, verè poterit reſpondere illud ſibi non eſſe dictum, ſubintelligendo non eſſe ita ei dictum, ut teneatur id prodere. Cum igitur omnes confiteantur illud, nemo debet hoc negare. Nav. ib. n. 8.

he may deny what he knows as God. But *Navarr* at large ſhews the folly and abſurdity of this Anſwer, becauſe this doth not ſalve the contradiction, for to ſay *he doth not know* is as much as to ſay he doth not any way know it; which is falſe if he doth know it in any capacity: and it is falſe that he doth not know it *as man*, becauſe he knows it as a *Prieſt*, and as ſuch he is not *God* but *man*. And the very *Seal* of *Confeſsion* diſcovers that it is made known to him *as a Man*, and with the conſent of the penitent a Prieſt may reveal what he heard in confeſſion; and in other caſes he may make uſe of that knowledge *as a man*, without particular diſcoverie. I do not therefore wonder to ſee the ſtout and plain-hearted Defenders of the lawfulneſs of this practice in other caſes, to expreſs ſo much aſtoniſhment at the nicety and ſcrupuloſity of thoſe, who diſpute againſt it as ſo dangerous and pernicious a thing upon other occaſions, when they think it ſo pious and innocent in this. For, ſay they, *If it be a lie to deny what a man knows, it is not in the power of the Church or of God himſelf for any end whatſoever to make it lawful for a Prieſt to deny what he knows.* And if it be not a lie in that *Caſe*, neither is it in any other.

Si enim eſt mendacium inficiari quod noveris, non eſt in Eccleſiæ, imò neque in ipſius Dei poteſtate, quocunque tandem ex fine efficere, ut Sacerdos licitè inficietur quæ novit. Emoner. *Splendor verit. Moral.* c. Barneſ. c. 16. n. 3.

But although none in the *Roman Church* are able to anſwer that argument, yet I muſt do ſome of them.

them that Justice, as to clear them from the owning the allowance of this practice in other common cases upon the same ground. Yet I fear upon strict enquiry we shall find that those do equivocate more who seem to deny it, than those who openly assert it. For, although two persons of the *Roman Church* seem wholly to reject it, except in the case of *Confession*; yet the *a* one of them is charged with † singularity and suspicion of Heresie, and the *b* other with little less than Heresie and Apostasie; and their proceedings with him shew what esteem they had of him. *c* But most of their other Divines and Casuists do approve it in case of *Testimony* and *accusation*. *Soto* doth allow a Witness being examined about a secret crime to say, *he doth not know any thing of it*, although he were privy to it: and for this he quotes some Divines of great Authority before him; as he might have done many others: but he will not allow him to say *he did not see the fact committed, nor that he heard nothing of it, because*, saith he, *words of knowledge seem to be restrained by judicial proceedings to that which a man is bound to declare*. But this subtilty the latter Casuists will by no means admit of, and allow denying the fact in any words; and

a *Genes. Sepulveda de rat. dicendi Testimon.*

b *Barns c. Æquivocat.*

† *Emoner. c.* 13. *p.* 241.

* *V. Theophil. Rayn. sive Emonerium adit. ad Disput. n.* 4, 5, 6.

c After *Fa. Barns* had written his *Book* against *Equivocation*, and otherways provoked the *Jesuites*, by order of the Pope and by means of *Albertus*, he was seized on, and carried to *Rome*, and there died mad in the Inquisition.

V. Leodegar. Quintin. Hædnum adverf. Th. Hurtado p. 71. where the *Jesuite* relates the story.

Soto de rat. tegend. secret. memb. 3. *qu.* 3. *concl.* 4. *Adrian.* 6. *quod l.* 11. *ad* 2. *princip. C. C. Sylvest. v. Juram.*

and ſay of him, *that he was afraid where no fear was.* They therefore ſay, It is enough that a witneſs anſwers to *what ought to have been the intention of the Judge, whatever his actual intention was*; and therefore if a man ſuppoſes the Judge not to proceed legally againſt him, he may not only deny the fact he knows, but ſwear to that denial, provided he keeps this in his mind *that he denied any ſuch fact which belonged to the Judges conuſance*; *or that he did not do it publickly,* * and in this caſe, ſay they, *there is neither lie, nor perjury.*

Coſm. Philiarchus de Offic. Sacerd. t. 1. p. 2. l. 3. c. 14. Navar. ubi ſupra n. 9. Sayr. Clav. Reg. l. 12. c. 17. n. 24.

Suarez de juram. l. 3. c. 10. n. 3.

** Mich. de Palacio in 4. d. 21. diſp. 2. Teſtis verè dicit Neſcio quum verè ſciat, quia teſtis non tenetur reſpondere Judici ſecundum ſuam iniquitatem, ſed ſecundum id quod poteſt ut Judex, et ſecundum mentem quam debet habere, etiamſi illam non habeat. Mich. Salon. 2. 2. q. 69. art 2. controv. 11.*

Others ſay, no more is neceſſary to avoid a lie, or perjury in ſuch caſes, but only to underſtand the word of denial with this reſtriction *ſo as to be bound to tell you.* And this is the common caſe which *Parſons* and others ſpeak of. If a man be examined upon oath *whether he be a Prieſt or not*, they ſay, he may with a ſafe conſcience deny it with that poor reſervation in his mind; and that is a known rule in this caſe among them *that what a*

Quando igitur reus negat ſe crimen feciſſe, id in animo habere debet, ut neget ſe non commiſiſſet tale crimen de quo Judex interrogare debeat. Et idem eſt dicere, non feci hoc crimen, ac ſi diceret non publicè feci, quod verum eſt. Et cum hæc reſponſio ſit vera, nullum erit peccatum, etiamſi intercedat juramentum. Lud. Carbo tr. de reſtit. q. 19. concl. 8.

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man may truly say, he may truly swear. So that a Priest may not only say, but swear he is none, and yet by this admirable art neither tell a lie, nor forswear himself. *Quamvis regulariter adjuratus respondere debeat adjuranti juxta mentem ejus, fallit tamen ea doctrina, quando alia mente quam debet adjuratur; tunc enim sufficit ut respondeat verum secundum mentem & intentionem suam, licet falsum sit secundum mentem interrogantis, & adjurantis. Greg. Sayr. Clav. Reg. l. 12. c. 17. n. 21. &c.*

Parsons Treatis. of Mitigat. *c.* 8. *n.* 20. 51. 57. *c.* 9. *n.* 2.

Some of later times being made sensible of the pernicious consequences of the imputation of such doctrines and practices to their Church have endeavoured to qualifie and restrain the *Abuse* of them. But upon due examination we shall find this to be only a greater art to avoid the *odium* of these things and a design to deceive us with the greater fineness. For they allow the same words to be said either in *oaths* or *Testimonies*, i. e. a plain denial of what they know to be true, but only differ from the other as to the way of excusing such a denial from being a lie: which say they, *depends on the circumstances of denying, and not upon the reservation of the mind.* So *Malderus* himself grants, that a guilty person being examined upon a capital Offence, may deny the fact with this reservation, *so as to be bound to tell it*; but then he saith, *the circumstances give that sense and not the reservation in his mind.* But saith *Emonerius* (or rather a famous *Jesuite* under that name) *these circumstances only limit the words to such a sense which they* can-

Malder. de abusa restr. c. Mental. c. 10 §. 1. p. 64.

Emoner. splend. verit. moral. c. 16.

cannot otherwiſe bear, becauſe in ſuch circumſtances a man is not bound to declare what he knows, therefore, ſaith he, *whereever there is a reaſonable cauſe of concealing what a man knows, ſuch mental reſervations are to be underſtood,* and ſo there is the ſame liberty allowed in practice.

Among the late Caſuiſts none hath ſeemed to have written with more pomp and vanity againſt *mental Reſtrictions* than *Caramuel*; yet he not only allows a *Confeſſour* to deny upon *oath* what he heard in *Confeſſion*; but in caſe of *ſecret Murder* that a man may with a good conſcience deny the Fact, though the Judge be competent and proceed according to due form of Law. What way can this be excuſed from a lye, ſince he ſaith, *a mental reſervation will not do it?* He hath a fetch beyond this. *A Judge is only to proceed upon evidence; if there be no ſufficient evidence againſt him, he may perſiſt in denying it, becauſe it cannot be fully proved, and therefore his denyal,* ſaith he, *is of ſuch a fact which he can proceed upon, and what cannot be proved is none in Law.* Theſe are the ſhifts of thoſe who ſeem moſt to oppoſe the *Jeſuitical* art of **E***quivocation*; and inveigh bitterly againſt it, as a thing wholly repugnant to the Truth of our words and the ſincerity of our minds, and that Candour and Simplicity

Caramuel Haplotes ſive de reſtrict. mental. art. 13. p. 360.

Quod igitur plenè probari non poteſt, infectum civiliter & virtualiter eſt, hoc eſt prudentum judicio & æſtimatione ita ſe habet, acſi factum non eſſet. At quæ facta non ſunt negari poſſunt; ergo etiam quæ ſecreò ſunt facta. Caram. p. 362.

plicity which ought to be in Christians.

But in my apprehension they had altogether as good take up with the dull way of lying, or with the common artifice of equivocation and mental reservation, as make use of such refinings as these.

But however, we gain this considerable advantage by them, that they do assure us, that mental reservations are so far from excusing the words spoken from being a lye, that they contain *a premeditated lye*; *and so the sin is the more aggravated by them*; that all such propositions are in themselves false, and designed only to deceive others, and so all the effect and consequence of lying follow them; that there is nothing so false but may be made true, nothing so true but may be made false by this means. *Caramuel* gives a remarkable instance of this kind in some of the Articles of the *Creed*; for by this way of *mental reservation* a man might truly say, *Christ was not born*, understanding it secretly, *at Constantinople*. *He did not suffer*, viz. *at* Paris. *He was not buried*, viz. *in* Persia. *He did not rise again*, viz. *in* Japan. *Nor ascended into Heaven*, *viz.* from *America*: so that by this blessed Art, the most abominable Heresies may be true doctrine; and the most cursed lyes prove precious Truths.

Cajet. in 2. 2. qu. 89. art. 7. ad 4.

Imo illâ ipsâ suæ restrictione convincitur non præcipitanter fuisse mentitus, sed quodammodo meditatus fuisse mendacium quod gravitatem peccati augeret. Malder. de abusu restr. ment. c. 10. §. 2. p. 70. Ut quidvis licet falsissimum verum fieri possit restrictione sola mentali. Id. p. 28. Caramuel. lb. art. 2. concl. 4. p. 28.

Besides, they confess that *it takes away all confidence in mens words, and destroys all sincerity of conversation*,

Th. Alb. Stat. Morum Tom. 1. p. 172. Malder. p. 24. Azor. Instit. Moral. p. 1. l. 11. c. 4. Layman. Theol. Mor. l. 1. tr. 3. c. 13. n. 6, 7.

ſation, and the very inclination to ſpeak Truth: For as *Malderus* well obſerves, *there is no reaſon men ſhould not have the ſame liberty in private converſation which is allowed them before an incompetent Judge*: and ſome *Jeſuites* themſelves grant, *that if the common uſe of it be allowed, there can be no ſecurity as to mens words, there being nothing ſo falſe but it may be made true in this way.* And no man can be charged with a lye till they know his heart; nor the *Devil* himſelf in all his *lying Oracles*; who ſurely had wit enough to make ſome ſecret reſervation; and a very little will ſerve for that according to *Suarez*, who ſaith, *it is enough in the general, that a man intend to affirm or deny in ſome true ſenſe*; although he know not what.

Suarez de Rel. To. 2. l. 3. c. 10. n. 4.

Since from their own Authors, we thus far underſtand the miſchievous conſequence of theſe practices, it will not be amiſs to ſet down briefly the *caſes*, wherein they are commonly allowed.

Leſſ. de juſtit. & jure l. 2. c. 42. dub 9. n. 47.

1. In general, *Whereever there is a juſt and reaſonable Cauſe for concealing of Truth.* For that is the moſt general rule they give in this caſe; where a man is not bound to ſpeak his whole mind, he may utter one half, and reſerve the other half of one entire propoſition. Now *a juſt and reaſonable Cauſe* with them is *declining of danger, or obtaining any advantage to themſelves either as to body, honour, or eſtate.* In all ſuch caſes, they allow *that a man may ſpeak what*

what is ſimply falſe and ſwear to it too, provided that he hold ſomething in his mind which makes it true. But if a man happen to do it without *juſt cauſe*, what then? doth he lye? doth he forſwear himſelf? by no means. *But he is guilty of Indiſcretion*: and is that all? then they tell him for his comfort, *that an oath that wants only diſcretion is no mortal ſin.*

Poteſt aliquis jurare ſimpliciter falſum addendo aliquid mente, ex quo juramentum ſit verum, quoties intervenit juſta

cauſa. Juſta cauſa eſſe poteſt neceſſitas, vel utilitas ad ſalutem corporis, honoris, rerum familiarium, vel etiam quando injuſta interrogatio proponitur. Dian. part. 3. tr. 6. reſol. 30.

Sed juramentum cum deficit ſola diſcretio, non eſt peccatum mortale. Sanch. in ſum. tom. 1. l. 3. c. 6. n. 27. aliique.

2. If a man be barred the uſe of *Equivocation*, or *mental reſervation*, that doth not hinder the uſing it, even in renouncing *equivocation*. Even *Soto* himſelf ſaith, *that if a Magiſtrate requires from a perſon to ſpeak ſimply all he knows of ſuch a matter*; *i. e.* without any reſervation; *a man may ſtill anſwer he knows nothing of it*; *i. e.* with this reſervation, *to tell him*. *But what if in particular*, ſaith he, *he asks about a ſecret Murder; whether Peter killed John, which he alone ſaw, doth it not ſeem to be a lye for him to ſay, he knows nothing of it?* No, ſaith he; *for ſtill the meaning is, ſo as he is bound to tell.* F. *Parſon* ſpeaks home to this point; *Suppoſe*, ſaith he, *a Judge asks a man whether he doth equivocate or not? He may anſwer, Not, but with another equivocation. But if he ſtill ſuſpects he equivocates, what then is to be done? he may deny it with another equivocation; and ſo, toties quoties, as often as he asks, the other*

Soto de ration. tegend. ſecret. memb. 3. qu. 3. concl. 4.

V. Barns c. Æquivocat. §. 20. n. 3. p. 174. §. 22. n. 7.

other may deny and ſtill with a farther equivocation. Suppoſe a Prieſt, ſaith Jacob. à Graffiis, be asked a thing he heard in confeſſion, may he deny that he knew it? Yes, ſaith he, and ſwear it too; becauſe he knew it not as man. But ſuppoſe he be asked whether he knew it not as man, but as God? He may deny it ſtill, with another equivocation, i. e. not as God himſelf, but as his Miniſter. What if a Judge, ſaith Bonacina, be ſo unreaſonable to bar all equivocation? yet the reſpondent may equivocate ſtill. And he cites ſeveral others of theirs who defended this practice; and therefore Barns ſaith, it is ſo ſlippery a thing, that the faſter you think to hold it, the ſooner it gets from you.

Jac. de Graffiis deciſ. aureæ l. 1. c. 23. n. 3.

Quando quis iniquè interrogat excludendo omnem æquivocationem, poſſe interrogatum uti æquivocatione apponendo aliquam particulam in mente, per quam verum efficiatur juramentum. Bonacina To. 2. diſp. 4. q. 1. punct. 12. n. 5.

3. If a man be charged with a ſecret crime, which cannot be ſufficiently proved by Teſtimonies beyond all exception, he may ſafely deny it, though he were guilty of it. If a man, ſaith Leſſius, can make any exception againſt the Witneſſes, or ſhew that it was a report ſpread abroad by men, that bore ill will to him, or that there was ſome miſtake in it, he is not bound to confeſs the truth, and conſequently he may deny it with a reſervation. Nay, as long as the thing is ſo ſecret, that a man may probably defend himſelf, and hope to eſcape, he may perſiſt in denying the fact; although the Judge do proceed according to due Form of Law, ſaith the ſame Leſſius. It is no mortal ſin to deny it, ſaith Filliucius.

Leſſ. de juſtit. & jure, l. 2. c. 31. dub. 3. n. 8.

Filliucius. Not, though others be like to ſuffer for it, ſaith *Em. Sà*; eſpecially if the puniſhment be capital, ſaith *Filliucius* and others in him. But if a man doth ſuſpect whether the Judge doth proceed according to *due form of Law*, which depends upon his opinion of the proofs and Witneſſes brought againſt him, they make no queſtion then, but he may deny the fact by help of an eaſie reſervation in his mind.

Filliuc. Mor. Quæſt. tr. 40. c. 9. n. 266. Sà Aphoriſm judicial. Actus, n. 3.

4. If a man hath denyed the *Fact* when he was bound to confeſs it in Court, according to their rules, yet they will not allow that he is bound to confeſs it before execution. Becauſe ſaith *Navarr*, *confeſſion to a Prieſt and abſolution by him is ſufficient for ſalvation. His Confeſſour ought not to put him upon it*, ſaith *Diana*. *Not unleſs it be clearer than Noon-day that the Law compels them to it*, ſay others; *i.e.* that they have no kind of exceptions again the judicial proceedings. Some thought they ought then to do it for the reputation of the Judges who otherwiſe might ſuffer in the eſteem of the People as condemning innocent perſons; but this is over-ruled by the generality of the later Caſuiſts, becauſe the preſumption is alwayes on the ſide of the Judges, when they proceed according to Law. But one of the lateſt *Caſuiſts* hath given

Navarr. Man. c. 25. n. 38. Dian. Sum. v. Reus n. 12. Fac. de Graffiis, l. 3. c. 7. n. 17. Eſcobar tr. 6. ex. 6. n. 62. Azor. p. 3. l. 13. c. 25. dub. 5. Sayr. Clav. Reg. l. 12. c. 17. Layman. l. 3. tr. 6. c. 5. n. 3. Sà Aphor. de Reo. n. 5, 6. Baſſ. reus p. 5. n. 15.

an excellent Reason against * publick Confession, because they are accounted Cowards and Fools that make it.

Lugo de Justit. & jure Tom. 2. Disp. 40. sect. 1. n. 19.

* Imo pusillanimes & stulti habentur si ea fuerantur. Dicast illo de juramento d. sp. 2. dub. 12. n. 377.

5. Where the Judge is supposed *incompetent*, they make no question of the use of *Equivocation* and *mental reservation* in denying the crimes they are guilty of. An *incompetent Judge* is one that wants lawful jurisdiction over the person; as if a *Layman* pretend to judge one in *Orders* according to their doctrine of exemption; or if a *Heretick* or *excommunicated person* take upon him to judge good Catholicks.

And thus they look on all our *Judges* as *incompetent*; of which, besides the general charge of *Heresie*, we have this particular evidence. When the unquietness of the *Jesuites* gave just occasion to those severe Laws which were made after the *Bull* of *Pius* 5. several cases were proposed at *Rome* for *Resolution* in order to the better conduct of their affairs here; and among the rest this, *Suppose an oath be required in an Heretical Court before incompetent Judges* (quales sunt omnes nunc in Anglia, *as all are now in* England) *how far doth such an oath bind?* The Answer is, *no farther than the Person that swears did intend it should; and he may either refuse the oath*, or he may Sophistice *juware* & Sophistice *respondere*: *he may swear and answer with*

G. Abbot de Mendac. p. 41, 42. & in præf. p. 9. &c.

juggling

juggling and equivocation: and he that discovers any by vertue of his oath commits a double sin. And in the *Answers* approved by Pius 5. *our Judges are declared incompetent, and our Courts of Judicature unlawful Courts; and therefore no man by his oath is bound to confess any thing to the prejudice of the Catholick Cause; nor to answer according to the intention of the Judge, but in some true sense of his own.*

So that we not only see the doctrine and practice of equivocation approved by the *Holy See*, but all *legal Authority* among us utterly rejected as having no *jurisdiction* over them. And all who allow this practice do thereby discover that what they call *Heresie* doth take away the civil *Rights and Properties of men*. For if *Heresie* makes out *Judges incompetent*, by necessary consequence it must deprive the *King* of the *right* to his *Throne*, it must take away all the *obligation* of our *Laws*, and the title every man hath to his estate. Such pernicious consequences do follow the *wisdom of the Serpent*, where it is not joyned with the *innocence and simplicity of the Dove*: and not only *pernicious* to *Government*, but to *themselves* too when these arts are understood and discovered; for what security can there be from the most solemn oaths, the most deep and serious protestations of those persons who at the same time believe that none of these things do bind them, but by some secret reserve they may turn the sense quite another way

than

than we imagined, and when they pretend the greateſt *ſimplicity* and ſeem to renounce all *equivocation*, may then *equivocate* the moſt of all? If men had invented ways to fill the world with perpetual jealouſies and ſuſpicions of their practices and intentions, they could never have thought of any more effectual than theſe two, that *Hereſie*, or differing in opinion from them, deprives them of their civil rights, and that they may deny what is true, and ſwear to what is falſe, and promiſe what they never mean to perform by vertue of ſome ſecret reſervation in their minds. How can they live as fellow-ſubjects with others who do not own the ſame Authority, the ſame Laws, the ſame Magiſtrates, who look on all *Hereticks* in a *State* of *Uſurpation*, and all judicial proceedings againſt them as meer force and violence, and parallel the caſe of anſwering in our *Courts* with that of *oaths* and *promiſes* to *Thieves* and *Robbers*? for upon theſe grounds all the bonds of Society are diſſolved where what they call *Hereſie* prevails; and no obligation can lie upon them by vertue of any *Laws*, or oaths, or promiſes. I do not ſay that particular perſons may not, upon common principles of honeſty, make conſcience of theſe things: but I ſpeak of what follows from theſe allowed principles and practices among them, and what may be juſtly expected by vertue of them. How can we be ſure that any man means what he

Molan. de fide hæret. ſerv. l. 4. c. 8.

he saith, when he holds it lawful to reserve a meaning quite different from his words? What can oaths signifie to the satisfaction of others; when it is impossible to understand in what sense they swear? and when they pretend the greatest simplicity in renouncing all arts, may then by allowance of their *Casuists* use them the most of all? But can men upon sober reflections think it any part of *true Wisdom* to lose all the force of their *oaths* and *promises* with those among whom they live? Will they never stand in need of being believed or trusted? And then, if they desire it never so much, how can they recover any credit without plain disowning all such principles, and in such a way if such can be found out, which is uncapable of any mental reservation. Such kind of Artifices can only serve for a time, but when once they are throughly understood, they fall heavily upon those that use them. For although frost and fraud may hold for a while, yet according to the true saying, they both have dirty ends. The summ of what I have to say is this, That however *Simplicity* and *sincerity* of *conversation* may in some particular circumstances expose men to greater danger and difficulties than fraud and deceit may do; yet upon the whole matter considering the consequences of both, it will be found much greater *Wisdom* always to preserve the *innocency* of the *Dove*, than to use the greatest *subtilty* of the *Serpent* without

Barns de Æquivocat. §. 23. n. 2. p. 194.

out it. Which although it may seem to take off from the *fineness* of the *Serpents Wisdom*, yet it adds very much to the *safety* and *soundness* of it.

III. Prudent simplicity lies in the practice of *Meekness* and *Patience*. The *Serpent* doth not imploy its subtilty only in defending it self and avoiding dangers, but in watching its opportunity to do mischief, * being both revengeful and insidious: therefore we read of *the Adder in the path* that lies undiscerned in the sands, *that biteth the horse-heels so that the rider shall fall backward.* It doth mischief secretly, spitefully and artificially, by fit means and instruments. But Christ would have his Disciples to be *Wise to that which is good, but simple or harmless concerning evil*; so S. *Paul* explains these words of our Saviour, *Be ye wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves.* Which although they want no *Gall*, yet do not shew that they have any, whatsoever usage they meet with. Christ foretels his Disciples the injuries and reproaches they were like to suffer under, that their condition was like to be no better than that of *sheep in the midst of Wolves*; notwithstanding he would not suffer them to be furious as wild-beasts, or cruel and rapacious as the Birds of prey; but in gentleness and meekness and patience to be as *harmless as Doves.* Nor, as though Christianity did forbid men the just and lawful ways of preserving themselves, but it takes away the

* *Arist. hist. Anim. l.* 1. *c.* 1.

Gen. 49. 17.

Rom. 16. 19.

all malice and hatred and revenge and cruelty out of mens minds; it ſoftens and ſweetens and calms the tempers of men, and fills them with Kindneſs and Good Will even to their enemies, *not bring overcome with evil, but overcoming evil with Good.* Never any Religion in the world was ſuch an enemy to all kind of Malice, Revenge and Cruelty as the Chriſtian; that which we call *good nature* ſeems to come very near that Divine grace which S. *Paul* calls *Charity*, and doth ſo admirably deſcribe and ſo highly extol above miraculous gifts and ſome of the greateſt graces. *Charity ſuffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not it ſelf; is not puffed up; doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoyceth not in iniquity but rejoyceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things: hopeth all things, endureth all things*, i. e. in ſhort, it hopes, believes, and does the greateſt good; it modeſtly bears and heartily forgives the greateſt evil. And herein conſiſts that *Dove-like temper*, which Chriſt would have his diſciples remarkable for. Which however it may be deſpiſed and ſcorned by furious and ſelf-willed men, yet upon conſideration it will be found a great part of the *Wiſdom* of *living*. Revenge is the pleaſure only of weak and diſorderly minds: for what real ſatisfaction can anothers loſs or pain give to any conſidering man? The only pretence or colour for it is the prevent-

Mat. 5. 44 Rom. 12. 21.

1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6, 7.

ing more mischief coming on ones self; and yet every act of revenge is a fresh provocation; so that either quarrels must continue without end, or some body must think it their Wisdom to forgive at last. And if so, I appeal to any mans understanding whether it were not greater Wisdom to have prevented at first all the vexation and disquiet, besides other inconveniences, which must needs follow a continued quarrel. If any thing tend to make a mans life easie and pleasant to himself and others, it is innocency and gentleness, and patience, and doing good and vertuous things, whatever the world thinks of them.

And this was it which recommended the *Christian Religion* to the World, that its great business and design was, to perswade the *disobedient to the Wisdom of the just*; *by laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and all evil speakings; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; and if when they did well they suffered for it, by taking it patiently; following* therein *the example of Christ himself, who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judged righteously.* These are the instructions of S. *Peter* to the primitive *Christians*, and the ways he judged most effectual to promote the honour of their Religion, among those who were most apt to think and speak evil of it.

Luke 1. 17.
1 Pet. 2. 1. 3. 9. 2. 20, 21, 22, 23.

And

And because that was a very corrupt and a busie and factious age, especially in those Cities where the *Jews* and *Gentiles* inhabited together, therefore he adviseth the *Christians* not only to *purity* and *innocency*, but to a *quiet submission to Authority*, and however the *Jews* looked on *Heathen Government* as a *meer appointment of men*; yet he commands them *to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake, whether it was the Imperial*, the *Proconsular*, or *the Prætorian power*, not considering so much the *Persons* imployed as the design of the *Institution*, which was *for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the Will of God, that with this sort of well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, who are apt to quarrel with Religion, especially when it appears new, as that which gives occasion to many disturbances of the Civil Government. And that there might be no colour for any such cavil against *Christianity*, no Religion that ever was, did so much inforce the duty of obedience as *Christ* and his *Apostles* did, and that upon the greatest and most weighty considerations, *for conscience sake, for the Lords sake*, for their Religions sake. For consider I pray, if the Doctrine of Christ had given encouragement to faction and rebellion under pretence of it, if S. *Peter* himself had taken upon him to dispose of Crowns and Scepters, or had *absolved Christians from their Allegiance*, even to their greatest persecutors, what

2. 11. 12

13,

14,

15.

Rom. 13. 5.

a *blot* this had been upon the whole Religion, such as all the *blood* of the *Martyrs* could never have washed off. For it would have made the condition of Princes more precarious, and the duty of Subjects more loose and uncertain, and all Nations that regarded their own peace and safety shie of entertaining a Doctrine which would give so much countenance to Rebellion. And yet among all the causes alledged for the persecution of *Christians*, this was never once suggested, which would not have been omitted (if any such thing had been owned by the *Christians*) by persons so jealous of their Power, as the *Roman Emperours* were. It is an intolerable reproach to Christianity to impute their patient submission to Authority *to their weakness and want of force*: which is all one as to say, they would have resisted if they durst: this is not to make them *harmless as Doves*, but to have too much of the *subtilty* of the *Serpent*, in pretending to be innocent when they only wanted an opportunity to do mischief.

Bell. de Rom. Pont. l. 5. c. 7.

But the security the *Christian Religion* gave to *Government* was from the principles and precepts of it, the design of its doctrine as well as the practice of its followers. So that if their Religion were true, it did oblige them to all acts of charity and kindness, to meekness and patience, to peaceableness and a quiet and prudent behaviour in all the changes of humane affairs

From what hath been already said, it is no hard matter to understand the *Reason* why our *Saviour* gave such directions to his *Apostles*, and made choice of such means to promote his *Religion*; because they would hereby see, that he sent not his *Apostles* upon any ambitious or secular design, not to disturb Governments upon pretence of setting up a new *Monarchy* in either of *Christ* or his pretended *Vicar*; but to prepare men for another World *by the Love of God and our Neighbour*, by subduing our lusts and taking off our affections from present things; and because he knew what persecutions would follow his doctrine, he adviseth his Disciples neither to suffer as *Fools*, nor as *evil-doers*, but *to be wise as Serpents and harmless as Doves*.

Let no man then think our Religion weakens their understanding, or impairs their discretion, or puts men upon doing foolish and imprudent things. As it is founded on the best reason, so it brings men to the best temper, and governs their actions by rules of the truest Wisdom; not only as it provides for the most desirable end in another world, but even in this, it secures most the honour, interest and safety of men; and if circumstances happen to be hard here, it gives the highest assurance of an infinite and eternal recompence. But if men under a pretence of zeal for Religion do wicked things, and carry on treacherous and malicious designs, if instead of directing

mens

mens Consciences in the wayes of innocence and goodnes, they teach them the art of *putting tricks on God Almighty*, (as one called the *Casuistical Divinity* of the *Jesuites*) or the way of breaking his Laws by certain *shifts* and *evasions*; if instead of meekness and patience they put men upon acts of revenge and cruelty; if instead of promoting peace and tranquillity in the world, they plot mischief and stir up faction and rebellion, we are sure whose Disciples soever they pretend to be, they are none of Christ's; for although they should not all be capable of being *wise as Serpents*, yet they are bound to be *harmless as Doves*.

Nicol. Faber apud Wendrock. in Epist. Provinc. 8. Not. 3.

FINIS.